

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing communication service comprising the steps of:

- (a) an intelligent peripheral receiving an alert message, from a database unit that received a request from a switch to perform a service for a call, which message specifies a communications protocol for communication between said database unit and said intelligent peripheral parameter;
- (b) with reference to a database within said intelligent peripheral, establishing a connection between said database unit and said intelligent peripheral to operate in accord with a protocol pointed to by said protocol parameter,
- (c) communicating information between said database unit and said intelligent peripheral; and
- (d) communicating information between a switch and said intelligent peripheral over a bearer connection between them that is established for effecting said service, and associated with said call.

2 – 15. (Canceled)

16. (New) A method for providing communication service comprising the steps of:

a switch receiving a call;
said switch sending information pertaining to said call to a control element;
based on said information, said control element identifying a service to be performed;

said control element sending to an intelligent processor an alert message specifying a protocol to be used in interactions between the intelligent processor and the database;

in response to said alert message, the intelligent processor selecting, from among a stored plurality of software modules, a software module for employing in implementing said interactions between the intelligent processor and the database according to the protocol specified in said alert message;

said control element sending to said switch a message informing said switch of a bearer connection set up between said switch and said intelligent processor;
setting up said bearer connection;
said controller sending a message, employing said protocol, to said intelligent peripheral, requesting that one or more tasks to be performed that make up said service;
said intelligent peripheral performing said one or more tasks, employing said bearer connection as necessary;
said intelligent peripheral informing said control element that the task was completed; and
dismantling said bearer connection.

17. (New) The method of claim 16 where said alert message is devoid of any request to perform any task pertaining to said call.

18. (New) The method of claim 16 where function of said alert message is solely to establish a protocol between said intelligent processor and said control element.

19. (New) The method of claim 16 where said protocol is the SR3511 protocol or an ITU-T protocol.

20. (New) The method of claim 16 where said bearer connection establishes a communication path from said intelligent processor, via said switch, to another party.

21. (New) The method of claim 16 where said step of said intelligent peripheral informing said control element that the task was completed is preceded by a step of said intelligent peripheral sending results of said one or more tasks to said control element.